

Guidance For The Believers In Times Of *Fitn*

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From the Sunnah of Allaah is that He will test us with illness, hardship, loss of wealth, and lives. He will try us throughout our lives, regardless of location. But the greatest trial we can ever have is a trial in our religion. The Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) told us to seek refuge in Allaah from ever being tried in our religion. He said:

اللهم لا تجعل مصيبتنا في ديننا

Oh Allaah, do not try us in our religion. [at-Tirmidhee]

Bukhaaree narrates that Abu Maleeka use to say:

اللهم إنا نعوذ بك أن نرجع علي أعقابنا أو نفتن في ديننا

Oh Allaah, we seek refuge in you from ever turning our backs on the religion or being tried in our religion

There will never come an age, a year or a time except we will find *fitn* (trials). And as we draw further away from the time of the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) more *fitn* will appear and greater *fitn* will appear until we reach the greatest of all *fitn*: the major signs of the end of the world.

The word "*fitnah*" (sing. of *fitn*) has many connotations in the Qur'aan and Sunnah. The most common meaning of this word is "trial" – that is, any situation or object that makes it difficult for a Muslim to obey the command of Allaah, abstain from sin, or safeguard his faith.

A *fitnah* is a distraction that deflects a believer's attention from Allaah's worship.

"Ibn al-A'raabi summed up the meanings of *fitnah* when he said: "*Fitnah means testing, fitnah means trial, fitnah means wealth, fitnah means children, fitnah means kufr, fitnah means differences of opinion among people, fitnah means burning with fire.*" [Lisaan al-'Arab by Ibn Manzoor]

But Islaam makes clear for us how to avoid *fitn*, how to depart from such situations and how to protect ourselves from falling into them.

1. Holding firm to the book of Allaah and the *sunnah* of the Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), increasing our knowledge of them with a sincere intention.
2. Returning to the true scholars of this religion, taking advice from them and learning our religion from them.
3. Holding firm to the leaders of each community, whether they be *masjids* or community centres, wherever they are, remaining united with their leadership. Do not challenge them, and cause division and hatred amongst the Muslims.

4. Do not rush to make judgement, blame, accuse, seek revenge or become angry, wait for the rays of the sun to reach their zenith, meaning for matters to become clear and obvious.
5. Seek repentance from Allaah from the many sins we commit in open and in secret. Seek solitude with yourself and Allaah and make your religion sincere for him alone.
6. Your call should be to peace in the town, and safety for all Muslims and non-Muslims even though the governments may be terrorising the lands of the Muslims. This is because, if safety and peace were to be removed from our town then we would not be able to help our Muslims in other lands because we will be busy protecting ourselves!
7. Encouraging the community to be well grounded in the understanding of their religion so as not to increase the *fitn* we are already experiencing.
8. Exercise *sabr* (patience) and even more patience with the trial we face and may face ahead of us. Remaining patient just as the former generations did when they were punished by the non Muslim community around them in Makkah.
9. Learn the correct *aqeedah* (creed), learn the correct *manhaj* (methodology) in how to revive Islaam and Muslims.
10. Read books on how to behave at times of trials and difficulties, returning to the Qur'aan, its recitation and reading and implementing the *sunnah*.
11. Be protective over the five daily prayers, make *du'aa* (supplication) in your *sujood* (prostrations), make *Qunoot al-Naazilah*,¹ asking Allaah to lift this trial off the Muslims.

How We Should Deal With The Trial We At The Islamic Centre Have Faced Over These Last Few Days:

Firstly let us make clear the situation as it is in reality right now, things may change as they do at times of *fitn* daily, but for what has occurred up to now we have evidence of the following:

Extremist right-wing websites have claimed the bombing was in revenge for what the Muslim extremists carried out of protesting against the British armies return to UK from Iraq.

In reply to them we say: We at the Islamic Centre want to make this explicitly clear – we had nothing to do with that tiny minority of foolish Muslim extremists who carried out that protest without correct Islamic guidance. No member of our mosque, community, or anyone who associates himself with our Islamic centre condones that protest against the British Army return. However we do hold the war in Iraq to be illegal and an oppression of the Muslims of that country, just as many non-Muslims hold.

Secondly, we will not retaliate in any violent manner whatsoever to this cowardly attack on our building which could have killed many children as well as adults. Islaam is a religion of submission and peace. We at the Islamic Centre are the

¹ *Qunoot* is a supplication offered during prayer at a specific point while standing. There is the *Qunoot* in the *Witr* prayer and the *Qunoot al-Naazilah* which is made at times of calamity.

flag bearers of this – hence we named ourselves the Islamic Centre. Islaam means peace and submission. We call to peace, not violence, and free ourselves from any Muslims or non-Muslims, wherever and whoever they maybe that call to violence and killing of innocent Muslims and non-Muslims.

We will deal with our situation upon guidance from the Qur'aan and the Prophetic ahadeeth as explained to us by the righteous scholars of this generation. Allaah gave us a beautiful example in the story of Yusuf (alayhis-salaam) when he was imprisoned for something he did not do. He was oppressed by the ruler and imprisoned for many years. He faced trials and hardships in prison. When his innocence was finally declared and he was released: Did he retaliate? Did he seek revenge? Did he oppress others? No, he did not. So this is our example and this story fits our situation today. We were wrongly oppressed, our *masjid*, our community were wrongly attacked, but we shall not come out of this except with good patience, fairness, and we shall not oppress others as we were oppressed. This is the teachings of the *Qur'aan*, this is what Islaam requires from us.

Thirdly, we will take no heed of Anjam Chowdry's claim that Muslim have a right to retaliate after this bombing – this statement of his is based upon sheer ignorance of the religion of Islaam. Who is he? And who gave him the right to speak on our behalf and on behalf of the general Muslims living in UK. As Muslims living in a non-Muslim country we are obliged to abide by their laws as long as they do not contradict Islam. Islam only allows retaliation through a legitimate *shariah* court, or ruling of the Muslim Khalifah or leader who has recognised authority and empowerment over a land. Such retaliation would be controlled by the State. We reside here in UK without a Muslim Leader, without authority or empowerment, nor do we have Islamic *shariah* courts. Therefore the pre-requisites do not exist. How this ignorant Anjam Chowdry can issue such a ruling with no basis is evidence of how much knowledge he lacks and is in need of.

Fourthly, we at the Islamic centre have been actively refuting and challenging Muslim extremists for the past 18 years. We have had many theological debates, conferences and one to one confrontations with individuals who held violent extremist ideas. Many of them have changed their views and become law abiding citizens through our efforts. The attack on our mosque was a gross error of judgment by the perpetrators. **Associating us with that tiny minority of Muslim extremists was like trying to make two north poles of magnets attract.**

Finally, we advise the media to take on their roles responsibly and make their objective: community cohesion, as opposed to sensationalism, especially at fragile times like this where race wars could easily develop, risking the departure of safety and security for both Muslims and non Muslims, and replacing it with fear and danger for all.

We as Muslim minorities should not lose hope or feel separated from the wider community. Our religion is the truth. What we are upon is worship of the true God, Allaah. His aid and help will indeed come. Let us examine how the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) dealt with such trials.

When the harm and plotting of Quraish increased, after the death of the Prophet's uncle and wife, he headed to Ta'if hoping that he might find in that trip greater attentiveness and support for his message. Instead, they turned him away in a very impolite manner. They encouraged their boys to stone him. They stoned him until his noble feet were bleeding. He was offered by the angels to crush Taif

– but he said no – perhaps from their offspring will come those who will worship Allaah. The Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) turned his face towards Makkah with fresh determination to resume his earlier plan to invite people to Islaam and communicate his Message in a great spirit of zeal and enthusiasm. Zaid bin Harithah, his companion, said to the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam): 'How dare you step into Makkah after they (Quraish) have expatriated you?' The Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) answered: **'Allaah will surely provide relief and He will verily support His religion and Prophet.'**

We also have this faith, that Allah will surely provide relief for us after this difficulty and He will support His religion.